

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAPE T 00548 140147Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 ( ISO ) W  
-----140401Z 063814 /75-62

O R 140025Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5954  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

S E C R E T CAPE TOWN 0548

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, SF, RH  
SUBJ: BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH PM VORSTER.

REF: CAPE TOWN 0545 & 0546

SUMMARY: OWEN MET TWICE WITH VORSTER. MORNING SESSION ON APRIL 13 WAS TO INFORM VORSTER OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE PROPOSALS AND BRIEF AFTERNOON MEETING TO REPORT ON IAN SMITH'S REACTION TO THE PROPOSALS. VORSTER'S ATTITUDE DESCRIBED AS ONE OF SKEPTICISM BUT NOT REJECTION. HE WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT IN TALKS WITH OWEN, SMITH HAD NOT EVEN RAISED SUBJECT OF REFERENDUM. END SUMMARY.

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN MET TWICE WITH PM VORSTER ON APRIL 13, PRIOR TO MEETING WITH SMITH AND AGAIN IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER. PHILIP MANSFIELD AND SIR DAVID SCOTT DESCRIBED SESSIONS AS CORDIAL AND BUSINESSLIKE. VORSTER INITIALLY  
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SHOWED RETICENCE TOWARD YOUNG, INEXPERIENCED FOREIGN SECRETARY BUT AS CONVERSATION PROGRESSED THE TWO MEN ESTABLISHED GOOD RAPPORT.

2. MORNING SESSION OPENED WITH LONG EXPOSITION BY VORSTER IN SUPPORT OF REFERENDUM IN RHODESIA. BURDEN OF ARGUMENT CENTERED ON DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING TRUE NATIONALIST LEADERS. VORSTER

NEVER GOT TO POINT OF PRESSING FOR ACCEPTANCE OF REFERENDUM  
BUT PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON IMPORTANCE WHICH SMITH ATTACHED  
TO THIS APPROACH.

3. OWEN EXPLAINED HIS IDEAS ON CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS IN  
CONSIDERABLE DETAIL, INDICATING TO VORSTER (AS HE HAD NOT DONE  
IN ANY OF CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER LEADERS) THAT USG WAS  
PREPARED TO "CO-SPONSOR" CONFERENCE AND PARTICIPATE. VORSTER'S  
BASIC REACTION WAS ONE OF SKEPTICISM. HE SAW ALL KINDS OF  
IMPONDERABLES IN TRYING TO REACH AGREEMENT ON INDEPENDENCE  
CONSTITUTION FIRST AND THEN MOVING ON TO ELECTIONS AND  
MAJORITY RULE GOVERNMENT. HE DREW OWEN'S ATTENTION TO DIFFICULT  
LAW AND ORDER PROBLEMS DURING THE PROCESS IF FIGHTING  
ALLOWED TO CONTINUE. HE ASKED WHAT IF MUZOREWA SHOULD EMERGE  
THE VICTOR AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT DOES NOT ACCEPT THE  
RESULTS -- WHAT WOULD THE UK AND US DO THEN? WHAT MACHINERY  
FOR IMPLEMENTATION WOULD THERE BE? HE NEVERTHELESS TOOK THE  
POSITION THAT IF OWEN COULD SELL THE PACKAGE TO SMITH, THEN GOOD  
LUCK. HE MADE NO RPT NO COMMITMENT TO PRESS SMITH TO ACCEPT  
THE PROPOSALS.

4. WHEN OWEN RETURNED TO SEE VORSTER BRIEFLY AFTER SESSION  
WITH SMITH, HE DESCRIBED SMITH'S GENERAL WILLINGNESS TO TRY  
THE CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS APPROACH. VORSTER ASKED WHETHER SMITH  
HAD NOT PUSHED HIS REFERENDUM IDEA AND WAS AMAZED WHEN OWEN  
TOLD HIM THAT SMITH HAD NOT EVEN RAISED THE SUBJECT. ACCORDING  
TO SIR DAVID SCOTT OWEN AND VORSTER PARTED WITH THE LATTER  
STILL SKEPTICAL ABOUT WORKABILITY OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE  
APPROACH BUT WISHING THE EFFORT WELL.

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BOWDLER

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, PDEV, SF, RH, (VORSTER, BALTHAZAR JOHANNES), (OWEN, DAVID), (SMITH, IAN)  
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**Review Markings:**  
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